



Office of the Commissioner

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April 7, 2025

Chair Moller, Chair Novotny, and members of the House Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee,

The Department of Public Safety (DPS) works to serve all communities and build a safer Minnesota. The investments included in the Governor's and Lt. Governor's public safety budget bill and this committee's bill come in the midst of a challenging budget outlook facing Minnesota.

I am disappointed and concerned that this bill recommends a significantly lower DPS operating adjustment than the Governor's budget. The measured operating adjustment recommended by the Governor would assist DPS in addressing cost pressures while still requiring us to make strategic decisions to ensure minimal impacts to the public safety work of our divisions. But the amount included in this bill will require difficult decisions that will negatively impact public safety in Minnesota. The amounts provided for Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) and Alcohol and Gambling Enforcement (AGE) will require divisions to limit hiring and filling of vacant positions which will have a negative impact on our ability to respond and investigate violent crime.

With the lack of operating funding provided, DPS does not have the needed funding to move into and operate the new Statewide Emergency Operations Center. This is at a time when federal funding for vital programs, including emergency preparedness and disaster response are being cut and responsibilities are being pushed to the state without additional funding. The minimal operating adjustments included will impact our ability to prepare for and respond to disasters and emergencies in Minnesota. I urge this committee to fully fund the modest operating adjustment recommended by the Governor.

I appreciate the inclusion of the statutory language to solidify the transfers from the Department of Commerce Fraud Unit to the DPS Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) State Fraud and Financial Crimes Section, including additional resources for a forensic accountant and to account for increased criminal prosecution. These additional resources for the BCA State Fraud and Financial Crime Section will bolster efforts to identify, disrupt, and hold those accountable who prey upon state programs designed to assist Minnesotans in need.

I am disappointed to see that this bill does not include the Governor's recommended changes to increase penalties for theft of public funds. Increasing the penalties for theft of public funds ensures individuals who seek to defraud the state are held accountable and demonstrates a

Alcohol
and Gambling
Enforcement

Bureau of
Criminal
Apprehension

Driver
and Vehicle
Services

Emergency
Communication
Networks

Homeland
Security and
Emergency
Management

Minnesota
State Patrol

Office of
Communications

Office of
Justice Programs

Office of
Pipeline Safety

Office of
Traffic Safety

State Fire
Marshal

commitment to combatting fraud throughout Minnesota. I am hopeful you will reconsider inclusion of this provision.

I would also like to see the funding for the long-term missing and unsolved homicide case system at the BCA included. The Governor and DPS recommended this funding to provide more real-time missing persons information in Minnesota and improve access to data on missing persons. This one-time funding would have a tangible and ongoing impact to victims and their families.

I am thankful this committee's commitment to funding crime victim services. As you know, the level of funding for these vital services provided by the federal government has been dropping significantly and Minnesota has stepped up to assist with the gap. With more uncertainty with federal funds than ever before, this bill ensures that funding will partially continue and help fund service providers for another year. DPS is also supportive of the creation of a special revenue account for dedicated crime victim services funding. Because this approach differs from the Governor's public safety budget, we will need to ensure that the details of a new special revenue account are fully reviewed to avoid any unexpected challenges. I look forward to continuing to explore potential long-term stable funding sources for this vital public safety work.

While I appreciate the inclusion of the ability for DPS's Office of Justice Programs division (OJP) to utilize up to five percent of grant appropriations to administer noncompetitive and up to ten percent to administer competitive grants from the new Minnesota Victims of Crime Account, I would also like to see this bill include this authority for all grants administered through DPS. Providing DPS funding for these administrative costs is vital to ensuring adequate resources for critical oversight functions for grants such as monitoring grantees and programs to ensure compliance with requirements, ensuring timely financial and progress reporting, and ensuring compliance with state and federal requirements. These functions require adequate staffing and resources and are a critical component of preventing fraud or mismanagement, as well as ensuring grant dollars serve their intended purposes.

Thank you for including funding to support law enforcement, the Intensive Comprehensive Peace Officer Education and Training Grant program will assist Minnesota law enforcement agencies with hiring. This additional funding could fund approximately 75 additional peace officers in local communities, contributing to public safety across Minnesota. I also support the inclusion of training funding provided to the POST board that will support law enforcement statewide.

Increasing the appropriation for the state Urban Search and Rescue Teams and Air Rescue Team and moving it to within the DPS State Fire Marshal Division strengthens the internal control structure for oversight of these state emergency response teams. Increasing the funding allows the teams to maintain their existing response capabilities and training activities in the wake of increasing costs.

The increased funding included for the state hazardous materials response teams will allow for maintenance and replacement of aging equipment that is critical for effective preparedness and response to discharges of oil or hazardous materials.

I hope this committee will reconsider the decision to leave out the DPS proposal to increase the fire inspection fee to ensure that all public schools pay the same rate for building inspections that ensure required safety measures are in place to keep school children safe. Aligning these inspection fees ensures the fee covers the cost of the inspection and levels the playing field for public schools.

We are supportive of and appreciate the appropriation of funds from the 911 Emergency Fund to Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) to address necessary capital improvements and operating

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expenses for the continued essential operations of the critical public safety ARMER communication system. This investment will allow for MNDOT to complete upgrades to the aging ARMER infrastructure and support continued interoperability of radio communications between state, local, regional, and tribal law enforcement and first responders.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill. We look forward to continuing to work with chairs, committee members, and staff to ensure this bill has all of the details right, can be effectively administered, and accomplishes the committee's goals. Thank you for your support of public safety. Working together to uplift the hardworking professionals who have chosen careers in public safety is critical.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Jacobson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bob" being more prominent and the last name "Jacobson" following in a similar style.

Bob Jacobson
Commissioner, Department of Public Safety